WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS,

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 64.

EIGHT HOUR BILL SIGNED

Brief History of the Enactment and Subsequent Amendments Passed by the Congress of the United States.

Washington, June 22.--Labor's eight-hour bill has been signed by the president. The history of the enactment of this legislation is interesting. The first eight-hour law adopted by Congress included all laborers, workmen and mechanics employed by or on behalf of the government of the United States, and became a law on June 25, 1868. The law was extended to include the letter carriers on May 24, 1888. The next change occurred a little over four years later, when the eight-hour law was strengthened by specific provisions requiring the government to not "permit" any laborer or mechanic to work more than eight hours in any one calendar day, except in cases of extraordinary emergency, this provision becoming operative on August 1, 1892. The eight-hour bill which has now been approved by the president was passed unanimously by the house of representatives on December 14, 1911. On May 31, 1912, the house bill, with several amendments, passed the senate. On June 5, 1912, the house of representatives concurred in the amendments added by the senate. The bill then went to the president for his approval or disapproval. On June 19, 1912 the president affixed his signature, thus making the eight-hour day a federal enactment. This law will go into effect on January 1, 1913, with the single exception that the law will not be in force and effect in the Panama Canal Zone until after January 1, 1915. The pen with which the President signed the bill was presented to President Gompers.

NEW LAW GOES INTO EFFECT

Louisville, Ky., June 22.--The new state law regulating the employment of female workers is now in effect. The statute prohibits all female workers under 21 years of age from being employed in excess of 10 hours a day, or 60 hours per week, other than those employed as domestics or nurses. This law also provides for seats for women engaged in specified occupations, and a number of other sanitary and moral safeguards.

PHOTO ENGRAVERS GET INCREASE

Kansas City, Mo., June 22.--The photo engravers on the Star, Post, and Journal have secured a new agreement providing for an increased scale of wages on the papers mentioned.

WILSON DAY

Washington, June 22.--The citizens of Arnot, Landrus, Antrim, Morris Run and Blossburg, Pa., and the surrounding country, hold their annual "Wilson Day" celebration at Arnot on Tuesday, June 18. "Wilson Day" was established as a regular annual holiday in honor of W. B. Wilson, former secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America, and now serving his third term in Congress, and being at this time the chairman of the labor committee of the house of representatives. The annual celebration is in commemoration of the valiant work and assistance given by Mr. Wilson in behalf of the miners and mine laborers in his home county, Tioga, and the country at large. A portion of the day was adopted to speech-making, and among those who delivered addresses were Congressman Wilson, Congressman David J. Lewis of Md., Frank J. Hayes, Vice-President of the United Mine Workers; Arthur E. Holder and Grant Hamilton, members of the legislative committee of the American Federation of Labor, and James Short, president of the Building Trades Department, A. F. of L. A large gathering of coal miners and their families were in attendance.

HOUSE REJECTS POWER PRESSES

Washington, June 22.--The provision for the gradual substitution of power for hand presses in the bureau of engraving and printing was ruled out of the sundry civil appropriation bill in the house recently on a point of order raised by Congressman Hughes of New Jersey. The senate adopted this provision and if it refuses to concur with the house bill, as amended, it will go to a conference committee, which will undoubtedly come to some agreement in the matter.

HALF TIMERS DECLINING

London, June 22.--In Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire cotton mills the campaign against half-timers has been and is being pushed vigorously by trade union officials. A late report from Blackburn, the largest cotton weaving center in the world, shows that half timers in that borough have decreased the last 10 years from 2,592 to 1,599.

PRESSMEN'S APPEAL

Washington, June 22.--The International Printing Pressmen's Union is sending out an appeal for funds to assist in carrying on the strike or lockout which was initiated by the Chicago publishers some time ago. The international convention convened at Hale Springs, Tenn., on Monday, June 17, and continued throughout the week.

FOREIGN MOLDERS ON STRIKE

London, June 22.--Four thousand molders have been locked out at Falkirk by the light casting section of the employers of the Scotish Federation of Iron Masters. Glasgow and Edinburgh are affected, the stoppage touching every section of the iron founding industry in the west and east of Scotland.

FOREIGN WOMEN'S LEAGUE

London, June 22.--Miss Mary R. MacArthur, secretary of the Women's Trade Union League, states that the total number of working women now affiliated to the league is about 200,000.

St. Paul, Minn., June 22.--Some months ago the management of the Great Northern railroad, upon learning that the carmen in its employ had been successful in forming strong local organizations at its division points, as the result of the efforts of organizers representing the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, issued a notice to the effect that as a condition precedent to retaining their positions the members of the new organizations must renounce their affiliation with the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen. This act was in direct violation of the state law, and the railroad company was proceeded against and the case has run the gamut of the courts. The Supreme Court of the state has just handed down its decision in the case, which returns a victory for the union. In part the decision says: "Theoretically the employer and employe are on an equality, so that one is free to employ and the other to accept employment as he sees fit, but in practice it is to the employe very often a matter of compulsion and not of free choice. As a rule his daily wage is needed for the daily wants of himself and family and nothing is left for the morrow. To sustain life he must needs obtain or retain employment on whatever terms it may be offered. Under such conditions his necessities may be easily made use of as a means of coercion. If an employer who knows that his employe is in a position where he must retain the employment or starve, should then with threat of dismissal from service coerce him to leave an organization wherein the employe found help and support, and which was in no way inimical to the interests of the employer, we would all unhesitatingly condemn the conduct of the employer as a moral wrong. We fail to see wherein coercion under similar circumstances may not also be a legal wrong and a violation of section 5079 R. L. 1905."

ACTIVITY AMONG UPHOLSTERERS

New York, June 22.--The local union of upholsterers affiliated with the Upholsterers' International union at Toronto, Canada, has secured an increase in wages of 25 cents per day by agreement. Likewise a local union of this craft at Denver, Colo., gained an advance of 50 cents per day without friction. At Syracuse, N. Y., the upholsterers secured an advance of 10 per cent without difficulty. Recent charters issued by the international are for Omaha, Neb.; Cedar Rapids and Des Moines, Ia., and Minneapolis, Minn.,

FOR COAL PRICE INQUIRY

Washington, June 22.--A resolution calling for an investigation and report regarding the high price of coal to consumers has been favorably reported to the house by the interstate commerce committee. If the resolution passes congress Secretary Nagel will be required to certify how much and in what particulars the coal miners were benefited by the recent strike agreement, and how much and for what reasons and by what means the cost of coal to the general consumer was at the same time increased.

HOD CARRIERS GET RAISE

Auburn, N. Y., June 22.--The local union of Hod Carriers and Building Laborers, after a strike lasting two weeks, have secured an agreement carrying an increase in wages ranging from 50 to 65 cents per day and the union shop.

JOHN MITCHELL AT TOPEKA

Ex-President of United Mine Workers Delivers Address at Auditorium in the Kansas Capital.

Topeka, Kan., June 22.--John Mitchell, under the auspices of the Topeka Industrial Council, recently addressed a large audience in the Auditorium in the interest of the Labor Forward Movement, his subject being "The Philosophy, Purposes and Ideals of the Trade Union Movement." In his address he covered the history of the inauguration and rise of the trade union movement in an interesting manner. In referring to strikes Mr. Mitchell said: "There is no one phase of our industrial life so much discussed and so little understood as the strike. It is not true that unions are organized for the purpose of striking. A strike is resorted to when unavoidable to secure better conditions of life. The prevalence of strikes is grossly exaggerated. A strike lasts, generally speaking, twenty-three days, but the average worker peacefully carries on his business for thirty years without the interruption of a strike. More men are killed in election brawls than in all the strikes for the last twenty years, but no one advocates that elections should be abolished. Strikes and lockouts will become less frequent when employer and employe come to understand each other." In closing his speech Mr. Mitchell affirmed that "the trade union movement is neither revolutionary nor destructive. It seeks not to disrupt society or the institutions of our country. Its purposes are constructive, its work evolutionary, and it makes for the perfection of society. It seeks the wider and more equitable distribution of wealth in order that all our people may be enabled to develop to their highest and best possibilities. The movement will be helped on in days of prosperity and retarded in days of adversity. There can be no doubt that the movement is onward and upward. Said that great humane philosopher, Thomas Carlyle: 'This that they call the organization of labor is the universal vital problem of the world.'"

BOURNE PARCEL POST BILL

Washington, June 22.--Efforts are being made to secure the passage of the parcel-post bill recently introduced by Senator Bourne of Oregon. It is understood that President Taft and Postmaster General Hitchcock are in favor of this measure. It is claimed by those who favor the bill that it is the most scientific and businesslike plan yet devised for a parcel post. Six zones of distance are provided by the bill, ranging from 50 to 2,000 miles. The rate of delivery within the first one is 6¢ for the first pound and 2¢ for each additional pound. The rates increase for each additional zone until in the sixth zone they reach a maximum of 12¢ a pound, which is the rate now charged by the international parcels post. It is provided that distinctive stamps will be used for the postage on parcels post matter, so that an accounting of receipts from that service may be more accurately kept. The chief opposition to the parcels post, it is stated, comes from the country merchant, but it is argued that it would eventually help him, for he will undoubtedly profit by the general business stimulus created by the measure.

BREWERY WORKERS ORGANIZE

Grand Forks, N. D., June 22.--The men employed in the breweries in East Grand Forks, Minn., have just completed an organization, with every brewery workman joining the new union.

UNITED BROTHERHOOD DOING THINGS

Indianapolis, Ind., June 22.--General Secretary Frank Duffy of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters states that the following trade movements have just been reported to him as the result of trade demands during the past week: Mason City, Ia., secured an increase from 35¢ to 40¢ per hour and a reduction of hours from 10 to 9 per day. Port Colbourne, Canada, gained an increase from 30¢ to 35¢ per hour, effective July 1. Worcester, Mass., obtained Saturday half holiday six months in the year in shops and mills. Meadeville, Pa., got a reduction in hours from 9 to 8 per day and a minimum wage of 37½¢ per hour. Rome, N. Y., secured an increase in wages from $3.00 to $3.28 per day, Saturday half holiday after July 1. Muncie, Ind., got an increase in wages from 40¢ to 43¢ per hour. Kingston, Ont., Canada, got increase from 35¢ to 37½¢ per hour. Pomeroy, O., increased wages from $2.75 to $3.00 and reduced hours from 9 to 8. New Haven, Conn. signed a three year agreement, including an increased wage of from 45¢ to 47½¢ per hour to May 1, 1913, and from 47½¢ to 50¢ per hour after that date to May 1, 1914. Salem, Ill., increased wages from 35¢ to 40¢ per hour. Lynn, Mass., increased wages from $3.82 to $4.00 per day. Fon du Lac, Wis., got increase from 35¢ to 38¢ per hour. Buffalo, N. Y., after being on strike for about a month outside men have been successful in securing a minimum wage scale of 50¢ an hour, this being a 5¢ increase. Louisville, Ky., gained an increase in wages from $3.20 to $3.60 per day.

IN SPITE OF C. W. POST

Washington, June 22.--Organized labor has successfully carried the fight into the enemy's country and declared victorious in so far as one staunch organization is concerned. In "Gripe-Nuts town", Battle Creek, Mich., the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employes have secured an agreement with the local traction company in spite of the fact that C. W. Post is the "big noise" in and around the city where is manufactured edible "saw dust". The traction company is now operating a union road, every employe being a member of thr Street Carmen's Union.

UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF LEATHER WORKERS

Kansas City, June 22.--A dual union using the title "New York Journeymen Harness Makers' Protective Union of Greater New York and Vicinity", is operating in opposition to the International United Brotherhood of Leather Workers on Horse Goods. The members of this dual union, it is stated by the International officials of the regular organization, are composed of former members of their greater New York union. The international union is vigorously at work protecting the interest of the legitimate organization.

A SANITARY MEASURE

Holyoke, Mass., June 22.--It is proposed by the state conference of painters and paperhangers, recently held, to make an effort to have a law enacted in this state similar to one now in force in New York, by which old wall-paper is removed in dwelling houses and other places before other paper is hung. It is stated that where the walls of rooms are papered and then frequently repapered the buildings become unsanitary.

ARECIBO BAKERS ON STRIKE

Arecibo, P. R., June 22.--The bakers in this city are on strike for an increase in wages, with good prospects of success.

TO WATCH IMMIGRATION

San Francisco, June 22--At a recent meeting of the executive board of the California State Federation of Labor a committee of 15 was appointed to act with a similar committee from the State Building Trades Council of California to formulate plans for handling the immigration question upon the completion of the Panama Canal. It is predicted that upon the opening of the great waterway an immense number of immigrants will be landed at California ports. The Oriental question in California is a difficult problem and added to this will be a still more difficult one. Ship-loads of immigrants can be transported by way of the Panama canal to the western shores of our country. The appointment of this joint committee evidences the fact that California unionists are going to make an effort to relieve the situation so far as is in their power.

DISTRIBUTORS OF CONVICT MADE GOODS

Washington, June 22.--Upon authority which has never been questioned it is stated that the Sears Roebuck company, the large Chicago mail order concern, is probably the largest distributor of prison made goods in the country. The company absorbs a large portion of the output of the skirt factory at the West Virginia penitentiary at Moundsville, the contract being held by the Kraft Manufacturing company. The firm also handles the product of the shoe factory at the Connecticut penitentiary, operated by the Charter Oak Shoe Company, as well as handling the product of the Reliance Manufacturing Company, the American Fork and Hoe company and other convict contracting corporations.

OHIO UNIONISTS ACTIVE

Washington, June 22.--A special session of the executive board of the State Federation of Ohio recently convened for the purpose of formulating a plan of campaign to support the new constitution just adopted by the constitutional convention. As a result the trade unions of Ohio are about to perfect organizations in each county to conduct an effective campaign whereby the constitution may receive the support of all trade unions in the state. The constitution carries many provisions that are favorable to labor, and it is the desire of the state federation that the new constitution be adopted.

ORGANIZING SYSTEM FEDERATION

Cedar Rapids, Ia., June 22.--Information here is to the effect that 25 lodges comprising the Order of Railway Conductors, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen, are favorable to forming a system federation on the Northwestern Railroad. This is following the line of the system federations recently perfected by the shop organizations on various western railroads.

ARRANGING FOR PENSION SYSTEM

Nashville, Tenn., June 22.--The board of education in this city has appointed a committee to work out the details pursuant to the pensioning of school teachers. This is commendable and other boards of education throughout the country would be serving a humane purpose were they to go and do likewise.

LA FOLLETTE AGAINST "GAG"

Washington, June 22.--The current issue of La Follette's weekly magazine contains an article anent the anti-"gag" provision recently inserted in the postoffice appropriation bill, which has passed the house. The article concludes: "The house did a good service in abolishing the infamous 'gag rule'. Let the senate do likewise. This provision should be retained in the postoffice appropriation bill so as to make it impossible in the future for any president, autocratically inclined, to put a bandage over the mouth of any servant of the people."

METAL POLISHERS

Cincinnati, June 22.--The Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers, Brass and Silver Workers' Union of North America is meeting with excellent success in securing agreements with firms that manufacture band instruments. Since the first of the year the following firms have signed agreements and are using the union label: C. G. Conn Company, Emil Blessings Band Instrument Company and Martin Band Instrument Company, all of Elkhart, Ind.; J. W. York & Sons, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Harry B. Jay Company and Frank Holten Company, both of Chicago, Ill.

TOLEDO'S CONCILIATION BOARD

Toledo, June 22.--The Central Labor Union of this city has issued a call to the unions to nominate candidates for the position of arbitrator and conciliator on the new municipal board which has been created at the suggestion of the city solicitor. The board is to consist of one member of organized labor and one employer, these two to agree upon the third. The board will have no arbitrary powers, but will extend its good offices as conciliator or act as an arbitrator at the request of both sides of any controversy arising.

STREET RAILWAYMEN'S INCREASES

Detroit, Mich., June 22.--The Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employes has secured an agreement at Bartonville, Ill., with the Peoria Terminal Traction Company, carrying an increase in wages to motormen and conductors of 10%, the rate now being 29¢ per hour. A 10% increase has also been secured at Plainfield, Ill., for the men operating the electric lines between Plainfield and Joliet, Ill.

PATTERN MAKERS

Cincinnati, June 22.--Officials of the Pattern Makers' League state that they are receiving reports from all sections of the country of wage increases and other improved conditions of employment. There is also a steady increase in membership and greater activity on the part of members of the local organizations.

SHEET METAL WORKERS SECURE INCREASE

Pittsburgh, June 22.--The Sheet Metal Workers of Allegheny county have just secured an increase in wages of 2½¢ per hour for journeymen and a substantial increase for apprentices, with the Saturday half holiday and the union shop. The wage scale for journeymen is now $4.20 per day of eight hours.

RAILWAY SERVANTS

London, June 22.--A. Bellamy of Stockport, speaking to a large meeting of railway servants of the Lancashire town of Bolton city said: "Our membership has increased by over 47,000, and we are in a much better position now to deal with out grievances than ever before." It was pointed out that the present agreement can be terminated in 1916. It was hoped that the unions representing the various grades of railway workers would be amalgamated into one body before that date, thus enabling them to deal more effectively with the railway companies.

A SIGNIFICANT CONTRAST

Newark, N. J., June 22.--It has developed in the strike of the laborers in this city that the strike breakers who have taken the places of the strikers are being housed and fed, in addition to receiving $3.50 per day. This shows to what extent some employers will go just for the purpose of fighting organized labor. The strikers only asked that they receive $2 per day, which the employers maintained they could not afford. It is apparent that the employers would rather fight union labor than to administer justice.

LARGE MEMBERSHIP

London, June 22.--At the 21st annual conference of the Postmen's Federation held in London recently, it was reported that the membership had reached 40,178. The questions taken up at the conference included the abolition of the "Christmas Box", the injurious character of dusty mail bags and the stair climbing by postmen delivering letters in the Western and Southwestern districts of London and in the tenement buildings of Glasgow, Dundee, and Paisley.

PAINTERS SECURE GOOD AGREEMENT

Calgary, Can., June 22.--The painters in this city have secured an agreement with their employers carrying with it an increase of 5¢ per hour and including the Saturday half holiday, overtime to be paid at the rate of time and a half and double time, weekly payment of wages, one apprentice to every four journeymen and foremen on jobs valued at $1,000 and over to receive 5¢ an hour extra. This agreement will not expire until March, 1914.

CARPENTER WAGE MOVEMENTS

Indianapolis, June 22.--The carpenters of New Westminster, B.C. have been successful in increasing their minimum scale to $4.25 by an amicable agreement with the contractors. The 500 union carpenters in Sioux City, Ia., have secured, without friction, an advance in the wage scale from 40¢ to 45¢ per hour, which became effective June 1.

TO NATIONALIZE PORTUGUESE RAILWAYS

Washington, June 22.--It is reported by a foreign news gathering agency that the next parliamentary session in Portugal will authorize the government of that country to take over the railways, which are now owned by French bankers. It is estimated that it will require $50,000,000 to complete the deal.

BOYCOTTING AND PICKETING DECLARED LEGAL

Memphis, Tenn., June 22.--The right to boycott and to peacefully picket has been upheld in a decree by Chancellor Heiskell of this city. The decree was the modification of atemporary injunction granted to a foundry company against the machinists' and iron molders' unions. The original injunction restrained the members of these unions from picketing and from publishing the name of the company on the unfair list. The chancellor sustained the contention of the strikers that they had the right to publish the name of the foundry company on the unfair list and also upheld the unions' contentions that they had the right to peacefully picket the plant.

PULLMAN EMPLOYES EXCLUDED

Washington, June 22.--In the circuit court in this city Justice Gould has handed down a decision to the effect that Pullman car employes are excluded from the benefit of the employers' liability act by releases executed by them on entering the service of the company. These releases provide that the employe will not hold liable the Pullman company or any railroad company over whose lines the Pullman cars may be operated for any injury received by the employe, even if the railroad company is guilty of negligence. An appeal will be taken from the action of the courts, as the decision is directly contrary to a ruling by Justice Anderson in the same case.

INJUNCTION REFUSED

Philedelphia, Pa., June 22.--Judge Bregy in the common pleas court refused to grant a permanent injunction restraining the federated committee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company employes from taking any action providing for a vote of the employees on the lines east of Pittsburgh and Erie whether a strike should be called unless certain grievances were adjusted. The grievances involve the number of steam trainmen to be employed on the electric lines of the Pennsylvania Company between New York City and Newark, and as to the wages to be paid brakemen employed in the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia yards.

BURLINGTON (VT.) NEWS

Burlington, Vt., June 22.--Two hundred and fifty members have been recently added to the Millmen's union (United Brotherhood of Carpenters). A Federal Labor union has also been organized with a large membership. The teamsters have been organized with over two hundred members, and two other unions are in process of formation with the prospect of a large membership. A strike of the millmen has been on for some time and one of the largest firms has just conceded and made settlement. Activity is being displayed to secure members of unions on legislative tickets for nomination to the state legislature.

SUSPENDER STRIKE STILL ON

Aurora, Ill., June 22.--The striking suspender workers of this city through their representatives, have had conferences with the management of the company and all matters at issue in a fair way seem to be settled save the reinstatement of the president of the Suspender Workers' Union.

The girls employed by the company are now on the strike roll of the American Federation of Labor and receiving benefits.

DECISION COMING DOWN

Washington, June 22.--It is again announced that Justice Wright will hand down his decision in the famous contempt case of President Gompers, Secretary Morrison and Vice-President Mitchell on Monday, June 24. Positive information, of course, is not available. There seems to be a general opinion in labor circles that to be consistent with the former course Justice Wright will reaffirm the former jail sentences of the Federation officials.

AGAINST CONVICT MADE DESKS

Fresno, Cal., June 22.--The central labor council of this city has filed an emphatic protest before the board of education against the awarding of a contract for penitentiary made desks for the public schools. It is stated that a similar protest was made last year at Springfield, Ill. and that the school board turned down a bid from a firm having its wares manufactured in the penitentiary and awarded the contract to a firm employing free labor.

MUSICIANS' AFTERMATH

St. Louis, June 22.--The 17th annual convention of the American Federation of Musicians recently held in Omaha, Neb., re-elected Joseph N. Weber president; Owen Miller, secretary and Otto Ostendorf, treasurer. The cash balance in the treasury of the organization is $89,000 and the secretary reported 588 locals on the roster, all in good standing. The next convention will be held in Toronto, Can., convening on May 15, 1913.

FAMOUS SEAMAN IN AMERICA

San Francisco, June 22.--J. Havelock Wilson who conducted the successful struggle of the seamen of Great Britain against the Shipping Federation arrived in this city on June 13. The maritime labor organizations of the city tendered him a reception upon his arrival and he later addressed the San Francisco Labor Council. Mr. Wilson will remain in this city about two weeks.

BIG STRIKE IN MONTREAL

Montreal, Can., June 22.--Four thousand men and women garment workers are on strike in this city for the abolition of the sweating and sub-contract system. The demands of the union are to establish the same conditions in Montreal as prevail in Toronto and Hamilton, and the usual feature, of course, is the fact that the clothing manufacturers have declared for the "open shop".

INTERNATIONAL PRESSMEN

Chicago, June 22.--The strike of the pressmen is still the chief topic of conversation in this city. While no advance has been made toward a settlement, yet the strike is exceedingly effective and is giving the newspaper publishers involved much concern as to the final outcome.

FREIGHT HANDLERS

Chicago, June 22.--The strike of the freight handlers is in its 6th week with no early prospect of an adjustment of the difficulties with the railroads. It is stated that the men on strike are standing firm and that very few desertions have been reported.